From the Author.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCY.

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HOWEVER ſome may boaſt of the mighty power of Britain, our great reſources, our numerous fleets and armies, the valour of our ſoldiers and ſailors, and the wiſdom of our counſellors and conductors; yet many are of opinion, there never was a period when they were more needed, nor a time when their ſtrength and ſagacity ever ſtood a greater trial than at preſent. After exerting all our power and wealth in a fruitleſs, bloody, waſting war, to bring our American colonies to acknowledge the Britiſh ſupremacy, and power of taxation—whether from impotency, intention, or misfortune of miniſtry, experience may now teach the meaneſt capacity, who is not blinded with party zeal, that, in any period of hiſtory, there never was a war carried on by Britain with ſo much expence, and with ſo little ſucceſs, and all to obtain the name or empty title of ſupremacy, the advantages of which the nation are in opinion ſo much divided about.

It is not my intention at preſent to enter into that worn-out diſpute about the juſtice or injuſtice, the propriety or impropriety of the American war, or the manner of conducting it: I can only now ſay, that, after ſo long a combat to bring about that accommodation ſo much wiſhed for, it appears every day more

difficult, and, to ſubdue that great continent by force of arms, ſtill more impracticable. If the Americans, by their own ſtrength, have been able to repel all the power Britain could exert for ſo many years, what can be expected when we have all that vaſt continent, joined with France and Spain, in open war againſt us, and, I am afraid, many of the other nations in Europe our ſecret enemies? After being ſo much exhauſted, to begin a new war, without one ally to aſſiſt us either with men, money, or even good wiſhes, is certainly very alarming; and, while one part of the nation are ſpending their time in uſeleſs diſputes and trials on bygone misfortunes, others are lulling us aſleep, while the enemy is at our doors, and threatening, by a powerful invaſion, to make our country the ſeat of war and devaſtation. And if any think it neceſſary that, as in Ireland, all ranks ſhould be armed, they are looked on as cowards or croakers, for intimidating theſe verbal champions, who have neither arms nor courage to repel the enemy, ſhould they, notwithſtanding the Dean of Glouceſter's plan of impracticability, effectuate a landing. It is impoſſible for any diſcerning man to ſit down quite unconcerned in this critical juncture of public affairs; and the more he regards his king, his country, and its happy conſtitution, the more will he be alarmed, when he ſees ſo many dark clouds ready to burſt upon them: whether it be apprehenſion or not, he will be more ready to prepare for defence than thoſe who can amuſe themſelves and others with high words on the Britiſh ſuperiority to all our foes. This has been our misfortune, I may ſay infatuation, ever ſince the commencement of our unlucky diſpute with America; and from a falſe pride of loyalty to our king and miniſtry,

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many ſeem to make that careleſs inattention to danger, that falſe courage, and fooliſh implicit faith in our public councils, the only characteriſtics of a loyal ſubject; while thoſe who are diſintereſted patriots, who will not in every thing either join the miniſtry, or minority, as, in a ſubject of ſo much latitude, in ſome things one may be right, and the other wrong, are looked on as diſaffected. But facts are ſtubborn things; every man of common apprehenſion and ſagacity muſt ſee and confeſs, that, year after year, we are Burgoyned, bamboozled, and beat; whether by the fault of generals, admirals, or miniſters, it is all the ſame to a country which bleeds at every vein by the wounds that trade, commerce, and manufactures daily receive, through this unſucceſsful war.

I am therefore of opinion, that, at preſent, he is the greateſt patriot, or phyſician to his country, while it rages in this intermitting fever, one day high in hope, another ſunk in ſadneſs, who can propoſe ſome remedy, or convince the impartial public, that it is far better to lop off a branch than loſe a tree, whoſe trunk may afterwards ſhoot out again; or make an amputation of a finger, arm, or leg, when ſigns of mortification appear, than endanger the whole body: or who can make it appear, that by giving up theſe bugbear names of ſupremacy, taxation, and dependence, which have been the occaſion of all our diſaſters, and, in ſhort, that making the Americans independent, and allowing them to trade with theſe who can ſerve them beſt, ſeparate from the vanity of a proud overbearing people, will be little or no diſadvantage to Britain.

It is this I propoſe to make appear, and have been at ſome pains to collect facts, which convince me and others, that if this event ſhall ſoon take place, which

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in all human probability muſt ſome time happen, inſtead of filling our minds with dreadful apprehenſions of a national deſtruction, it will be a ſource of more conſolation than all the chimerical tales, that are trumped about by violent and pretended patriots, of conquering America by deſolating fire and ſword, which hang on the unfeeling tongues of many, who have leſs regard for their king and country than thoſe whom they dub with the harſh name of malignants.

To evince this propoſition, it muſt be obſerved, that the real uſe and advantage of colonies to their mother-country, or of America to Britain, is to enlarge trade and commerce, to conſume our manufactures, increaſe our ſhipping and ſailors, and mutually to enrich one another.

If, by their being independent, it ſhall be made appear, that we only loſe that bugbear name of ſupremacy, or power of dictating to them their form of government, though our pride may ſuffer, yet, as merchants, our ſtock muſt increaſe, and our buſineſs extend.

Before I proceed, there is one fact which muſt be always carried along in the whole argument, which is, That Britons are naturally, as well as by long practice, a more buſy, plodding, mercantile, and manufacturing people, than any nation in the world: on that account, ſuppoſing the American market open to all, they would gain a preference in trade to every other nation or people. But let us conſider the other advantages we have to ſupport that ſpirit for trade, ſo peculiar to this nation. We are of the ſame language, the ſame religion, the ſame manners and cuſtoms, ſprung from the ſame nation, intermixed by relation and conſanguinity; theſe ſurely will give us a preference to ſtrangers, who have none of theſe connections,

nections, but have quite different notions of freedom, government, religion, and manners. But, ſuppoſe many of theſe to be eradicated by this long and cruel diſpute, the ſtrong tie of intereſt as merchants can never be broken. We all know, a new trader to a market, for a long time, deals to much diſadvantage, in compariſon with one who knows the dealers, and the goods which ſuit them, as well as what they have to ſell.

The Britiſh merchant, for a century paſt, ſets up his ſtore in America; he ſorts it with theſe goods he knows the planter wants, and what the country conſumes, who after being in ſo long uſe of theſe goods, it is hard to ſay if any other, though cheaper, would anſwer them, for many years, near ſo much to their ſatisfaction.

Another grand diſtinction is, No nation either would or can give credit ſo extenſive as the Britiſh merchant gives. For example, let us ſuppoſe a French merchant ſetting up a ſtore in Virginia or Maryland, in order to purchaſe tobacco, he muſt have, perhaps, from fifty to a hundred thouſand pounds value in goods of all ſorts, which he is to truſt to American planters, whoſe ſafety or circumſtances he is a ſtranger to; nor does he know either the quality or quantity of tobacco the planters annually grow; yet to a ſingle man he muſt truſt ſome thouſand pounds before the tobacco is planted, and take his word for the delivery of it when grown.

Then let us conſider what theſe commodities are, which pleniſh the Britiſh ſtore, and whether the French merchant can furniſh them cheaper or better. The groſs part of merchandiſe, carried to America, conſiſts of woollen, linen, cotton, paper, leather,

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and metal manufactures, with East-India goods and a few liquors, moſt of which, eſpecially coarſe woollen, we have reaſon to believe, can be exported from Britain at preſent as cheap, and more ſuitable to the planter, than from France or Spain.

Beſides, that confidence and liberality, with which a Britiſh merchant deals, will always be more taking and agreeable to a free-born American, whoſe ſpirit naturally ſpurns at ſlaviſh people, bred up under an arbitrary and deſpotic government. Such difference of ſentiment will naturally raiſe a piqueering and jealouſy on every little tranſaction in trade, which makes it probable, that their intercourſe in buſineſs will neither be agreeable nor laſting.

But I know the grand objection that is made to our dealing with America, if free and independent, is, That the French and other nations have the materials of many manufactures cheaper; and as they have leſs money, leſs luxury, leſs paper credit, leſs public debt, and fewer taxes, their labourers will work for leſs wages, and conſequently can bring goods to America much cheaper than the Britiſh. I grant that in many articles at preſent it may be ſo; yet, in the moſt extenſive branches, *viz.* coarſe woollen cloth for winter clothing to their negroes and ſervants, Mancheſter and Birmingham goods, iron tools, arms and ammunition, and even Scots coarſe linen and checks, and many other articles, we certainly do underſell other nations, as many of theſe goods are daily exported to markets in Europe, independent, and free to deal where they can be beſt ſerved.

If the conſideration and proper view of American independence, ſhall not only remove the gloomy thoughts which poſſeſs the minds of thoſe who have

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not duly conſidered the argument, but ſhall open a view that will fill the generous and diſintereſted with pleaſure, it will make it the more agreeable. I therefore propoſe to ſhew, that, by American independence, the widow increaſes her jointure, the annuitant, the ſoldier, the ſailor, the clergy, and officers of all ranks, will be enabled to live better, and their ſalaries return to be of that value moſt of them were originally intended to be; but if America continues dependent on Britain, this muſt ſoon make their income too ſmall to maintain them in a rank equal to their ſtation.

When the Britiſh merchants and manufacturers found there was an excluſive market bound down to them, and the Americans were obliged, under great penalties, to take none elſe but their goods, no wonder all the materials and wages roſe in price, and of conſequence all vivers and clothing roſe for home-conſumpt in proportion. If a weaver makes a thouſand yards of cloth, and finds a ready and profitable ſale for it, at a high price, he will of courſe continue, and others of the ſame profeſſion, ſeeing him grow rich, will take his workmen at higher wages, and increaſe the price of the materials, ſo long as they can get a conſumpt for their cloth with profit; and ſo of every other manufacture.

But ſtop the ſource of their ſale, and when they find America can freely buy at another market, ſuppoſe from ten to twenty *per cent.* below their price, they muſt that year loſe their profit, or ſell with a greater loſs. But behold them next ſeaſon; does any perſon think they either will or can carry on a manufactory without profit? No: they will buy their wool or yarn cheaper; they will bring down their men's

wages, ſo as to correſpond with the price other nations offer their goods to their old cuſtomers for. The conſequence of which will ſoon be, the ſheep, the oxen, the wool, the hides, and the meat, muſt be ſold cheaper, and all vivers muſt fall in proportion to the wages which workmen can earn; conſequently the butcher muſt buy cheaper, and the graſier pay leſs rent; by which the landlord loſes nothing, becauſe he gets as many of the neceſſaries and luxuries of life for two hundred pounds, as he formerly got for two hundred and fifty or three hundred pounds.

This decreaſe would be much felt, if all things were to fall of a ſudden; but we may ſuppoſe the decreaſe of money, and increaſe of its value, will come on by degrees. The rents of land at every new leaſe will fall, and land itſelf decreaſe in value; and as caſh is an ideal medium in commerce, it will be all the ſame in a few years.

If we can by theſe means bring our commodities to the American market on the ſame terms with other nations, the natural preferences I formerly mentioned will certainly ſecure a greater trade with that nation than ever we had before; becauſe our merchandiſe formerly being higher priced than they could be ſerved by others, it is well known that America ſmuggled more from other nations than they bought from us. Our ſhipping and ſailors muſt alſo increaſe in proportion to our trade with ſo diſtant a people, with whom we will then be at no expence, further than any other nation to whom we may be allied.

Should we of the preſent generation anticipate what may happen fifty or an hundred years hence, when America may become a great empire or commonwealth,

monwealth, and pretend to provide againſt events that may happen in future ages, we certainly wade out of our depth; and every day and year may convince our rulers, how imperfect and narrow human views are; how many events are hid in the womb of Providence; how many revolutions of ſtates and empires, or what balance of power may be guarantied by different nations, which will either fruſtrate our long laid plans, or diſappoint our diſtant fears.

It will be a long time before America can grow ſo populous, as either to cope with Europe in manufactures, or enlarge their territories, which are ſo extenſive, that, after allowing the greateſt natural population, as well as numerous migrations to that wide and uninhabited country, it muſt at leaſt be a century before it is ſo well peopled, as any of our European ſtates. It muſt be obſerved, that there are three different ſtations or claſſes into which mankind may be divided, viz. the manufacturer, the merchant, and the landlord, or heritable proprietor. To this higheſt claſs or ſtation, all the others are conſtantly aſpiring. As a tradeſman or manufacturer is more laborious, and a lower occupation than a merchant, the ambition of that loweſt claſs is conſtantly aiming at the mercantile line, and they, in their turn, bear all the dangers and anxieties of the merchant, that they may arrive at that flattering ſituation of landlords and freeholders. For this reaſon, while any ground remains to be acquired on eaſy terms, none will voluntarily be even merchants, far leſs manufacturers; eſpecially as by the ſcarcity of hands in America, a labouring man, who never ſerved an apprenticeſhip to a mechanic, can get more for a day's labour, or for ſplitting ſtaves, than moſt of our beſt workmen in Europe, when

working at the fineſt manufactures; for which reaſon, a man will never ſit down to a loom, or make a ſhoe, at one ſhilling per day, when he can make two or three ſhillings by out-labour: and were he to be paid ſuch wages in the manufacturing line, it would raiſe the price ſo, that a yard of coarſe cloth, or a pair of ſhoes, would coſt near as much for making in America, as the whole price in Europe. By this it will appear, there is little danger of the Americans running away with our workmen or manufacturers, until they have occupied theſe vaſt tracks of land which lie uncultivated for many thouſand miles, which cannot be done in a hundred years.

If there is any truth in the arguments now offered, that the independency of America, inſtead of being a loſs or ruin to the trade, manufactures and marine of Britain, will rather enlarge and increaſe them; what pity is it that this plan of reconciliation had not been agreed to ſooner? How many thouſand lives and millions of money would it have ſaved, the intereſt of which muſt hang as a heavy load on the Britiſh ſhoulders, every day leſs able to bear it?

I muſt think, that the plan and policy of France and Spain, may be eaſily apprehended by Britain, and particularly by America, who are moſt unnaturally connected with theſe powers. Britons, who are famous for dictating to other nations what they imagine to be their beſt policy, averred, and were ſure, that France, but particularly Spain, would never join the Americans, to make them a mighty commonwealth, as they would ſoon find their way to their gold mines in Mexico and Peru, and would keep France for ever from any hopes of again poſſeſſing Canada, from which they were ſo lately driven.

driven. But theſe powers reaſoned otherwiſe, in their political cabinet council: For, ſay they, if America continues joined with the mighty naval power of that ambitious purſe-proud nation of Britain, they in conjunction may ſoon effectuate their deſigns: but now we are happy to ſee them ſo infatuate as to be at variance with one another, whom we equally fear, and hate. Let them go on weakening each other; let us blow up the flame of diſſention, till both are near conſumed, then join with the weakeſt, and break the Britiſh arm, by dividing their great naval power, and attack them when their heart is leaſt defended; make a bold ſtroke there; if we ſtrike right, all the members will ſoon be uſeleſs. Then let us, under cloak of friendſhip and alliance, decoy theſe American dupes, and fix our government piece-meal amongſt them; and when we can poſſeſs ourſelves of the key of their ſhop, lock out theſe plodding old friends of theirs, theſe haughty iſlanders; and when we have weakened America, humbled their ſpirits, and prepared them for paſſive obedience and ſubmiſſion, let us erect the French ſtandard from Canada, to the river Delaware, and from thence, let the Spaniſh flag ſtretch all ſouth to their own poſſeſſions. Then may the poor deluded Americans cry for aid, from their old broken-armed parents, to rouſe the Britiſh lyon; but alas, he hath loſt his claws and teeth, and now can do nothing but roar and cry, that he, by his own folly, provoked his ungrateful children, to join their cunning foes, and allowed the Britiſh lyon, and American bear, to be caught by the ſubtile hunters, and ſo intangled in their ſnares, from which it is a chance, if they or their poſterity ever get looſe.

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If this ſhall be the caſe, no time ſhould be loſt in making offer to America of independence, only on condition of their neutrality; and while we can keep the keys of their ware-houſe out of the hands of their maſked allies, we certainly reſcue them, and ſerve ourſelves.

Some may anſwer theſe obſervations, by ſtating the advantages that muſt ariſe to Britain, from American dependence, againſt thoſe propoſed by independence, as ſuppoſing both to be equally in our power to obtain. Were that the caſe, it might in ſome meaſure alter the argument. But as the ſituation of public matters now appears to an impartial eye, it is at leaſt ten to one, if ever it will be in the power of Britain to regain her ſovereignty, by continuing this barbarous, inhumane, and unparalleled method of promiſcuouſly burning and laying waſte the towns, houſes and properties of friends and foes, which, to any feeling mind, appears not only the greateſt cruelty, but worſt policy. For, by Mr. Galloway's and other declarations, it appears, that three or four to one in America are friends to Britain; thus in every town or county that is deſolated, if four thouſand ſuffer, there muſt be at leaſt three thouſand friends deſtroyed, to come at one thouſand who from principle are engaged in ſupporting the American cauſe. Will any ſuppoſe, if ſuch meaſures are purſued, that Britain can have friends there long? If one town is burnt, and all ſuffer without reſpect of perſons, will not the friends of Britain in the next town naturally defend their lives and properties, againſt an army from whom they can hope for no protection? Neither can any agreeable accommodation be expected by ſuch meaſures.

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But, ſuppoſing Britain to regain her ſupremacy, can the moſt ſanguine imagine, while we are now ſo much exhauſted, and engaged with ſuch potent enemies, that a proper force can be ſent to maintain that ſuperiority, in ſo extenſive a country, when we cannot ſpare ſhips or ſoldiers to protect our own coaſt againſt ſo ſmall a force, as lately threatened to invade us, but allowed our trade to ſuffer, and our ſhips of war to be captured with impunity?

The queſtion then ſtands thus, Whether is it wiſe and prudent, or for the ſafety and intereſt of Britain, in her preſent ſituation, to perſiſt in ſo dangerous, expenſive, and unſucceſsful a war, and venture the loſs of every thing that is dear and valuable, even the ſubverſion of our happy conſtitution, for ſo diſtant and unequal a chance, of only acquiring what may be the balance of advantage, between dependence, and independence, which, many are of opinion, in proceſs of time will be found not worth contending about?

But, ſuppoſing it to be in favours of dependence, the chance of loſing the ſubſtance for the ſhadow, of a total loſs for a partial gain, or to obtain an object that admits of ſo much diſpute, has been the cauſe of ſo much difference and diſſention, and has blown up that ſpirit of party feud, and animoſity, in a nation, which ſo lately for trade, power and property, were envied and feared by all the known world; I ſay, the carrying on this fruitleſs, expenſive, and unpopular war, muſt every day appear more alarming and unreaſonable.

Many now have the candour to acknowledge, that circumſtances have altered their ſentiments of continuing this moſt pernicious diſpute about American

rican dependence; and ſince parliament reprobated taxation, the public ſeem to wiſh dependence alſo given up, which being relinquiſhed, may ſoon bring about a peace on much better terms, than when, in all probability, the Weſt Indies are taken from us; and none can ſay, how much more may be loſt, as we are ſenſible for ſeveral years paſt, we could have obtained much better terms then at preſent; and as public matters now ſtand, it is to be feared, that every year our terms of peace may be worſe and worſe.

If theſe obſervations ſhall be of any uſe to ſet that argument in a different light, to thoſe who think the dependence of America an object adequate to carrying on this cruel, dangerous and expenſive war, it will anſwer the intention of

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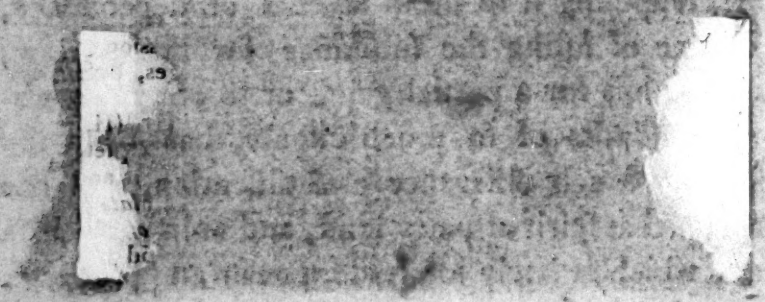
Mr Thos Day